



# ABIDE

## LESSON SIX: BACKSLIDING

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TAMI GLASER

It is written in Titus 3:3-11 that, *"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned."* The Bible defines backsliding as a moral lapse. The synonyms that are listed for backsliding include unfaithfulness and unbelief which is usually due to rebellion against God.

Have you ever spent time trying to untangle a necklace? There have been times when I will find my necklace has a knot in it that leaves me wondering when in the world did that happen? I did not notice anything different when I put it on in the morning, and yet here it is. I am certain I did not do any cartwheels that day, and yet here we are. Necklace knots make me wonder how they come to be because I am one of those people who puts on their jewelry in the morning, and it remains in place until the end of the day when I remove it. When I get to work untangling a chain or necklace I appreciate those big wide loops where the untangling comes easy and the time required is short, but there are those tight knots and tangles that leave little space for removal and require the point of a small needle to wedge between the links to loosen it up and lead the chain out of the tangled knot. Those are my least favorite knots because they take up a lot more time and effort in a morning that is already a rush to get out of the door.

Sin can be like that. Sin entangles us and invades every part of our life and relationships. Sin spreads like water when it is spilled and has no borders to contain it. It drowns, chokes, hinders, and makes us the enemy of God. It traps us, poisons us, and confuses us leaving us to guess what is right and what is wrong because nothing is clear anymore making us "experts," in our own eyes. We base our assumptions of right and wrong on our own experience or on someone we have been listening to. You may find yourself going along your life and then wonder how you got somewhere you never should have been in the first place. Or you may have what are referred to as "pet sins" that do not affect anyone else and you keep them a secret, but they are not a secret. God knows about it. Because of sin, we cannot enter heaven. Your most absolute best action on your absolute best day of your life will not provide you admittance into heaven because that amazing action falls desperately short. Instead, your eternal destination is an address you really do not want to reside in for eternity, hell. Then Jesus; He came and took the punishment that was meant for you. He comes to untangle your knots.

**YOUR TURN:** Pray before rereading Titus 3:3-11 and ask the Lord to reveal to you His purpose for you in this lesson.

- o After rereading Titus 3:3-11, write out a prayer below thanking God for sending Jesus to save you. Express how much your life has changed since accepting Jesus and ask how He can use you to further His kingdom.
  
- o One of the benchmarks of a Christian life is service. Think about the activities that interest you and then write out a plan of how you can serve your family or community in the name of Jesus.
  
- o Read Hebrews 12:1-4 and consider how Paul's writing in these verses is often time compared to a long-distance runner in a race. Consider the dedication and training required for a runner before they ever step foot on the starting line.
  - o What is hindering your walk with God? Is it an unconfessed sin? Is it a "pet sin" that you believe is unimportant because it does not hurt anyone else? Confess it right now and ask God to help you throw it away and not allow it to jeopardize your testimony any longer.
  
  - o When runners prepare for race day they purposefully dress in lightweight clothing so that the excess weight does not drag them down. What is weighing you down? Is it your friend group? Are your friends' values and activities causing you to detour away from your course? Choose friends wisely who are also committed to the Christian race. Do you need to quit or avoid certain activities because they are causing you to stray from the course God has set for you? Do you need help for addictions? Admit your need and get help today.